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Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Vol. XXXIX, Issue 2 Nov. 2006

What Happened To Cancelled Classes?

By Helen Goodman

This fall, teachers and upperclassmen have been disappointed to find that the era of cancelled classes seems to be over. While teachers used to be able to determine for themselves whether to cancel their classes or leave lesson plans for a substitute, a recent administrative decision now prevents them from doing so without approval from Principal Michael Jones.

Currently, the school does everything it can to provide a substitute teacher for each class in which the regular teacher is absent. Classes are only cancelled when a substitute cannot be found, or when a teacher gets his or her proposed cancellation approved.

Though the issue has not been brought up for some time, the Student-Faculty Senate has always advocated that the teacher of solely junior and senior classes be able to choose whether or not to cancel a class. In January 1991, Senate passed the "Substitute Bill," which allowed teachers to cancel exclusively senior classes provided that "[he or she] feels that the students' time would be more productively employed elsewhere" and that "an assignment is left for the students." In October 1994, the bill was revised to include junior classes.

Many students and senators are perplexed as to why the decision to cancel a class is no longer left exclusively up to the teacher. "I know Dr. Jones made a new policy," said senior senator Kelsey Savage, "but I'm not sure if our 1994 Substitute Bill was officially overturned."

The 1994 bill should still be in effect. Under the terms of the new policy, teachers should technically still be able to cancel classes if they meet the guidelines of the bill. However, from Jones's perspective, many teachers are unwilling to make the extra effort to get their cancellation approved. If all teachers have to do is get an approval, canceling classes should be easy. According to Jones, "very few people ask."

The problem may be miscommunication rather than a lack of effort on the teachers' part. Some teachers are under the impression that they are unable to cancel their classes under any circumstances, regardless of whether or not they have a rationale.

Last year, social studies teacher Samuel Kafrissen decided to cancel class on a day that he was going to be absent. His students were working on large outside assignments, and Kafrissen felt that they could spend the block more efficiently if they went to the library rather than to class. He got permission from Assistant Principal George Mechem and previous Social Studies Department Head Jack Papadonis to do so. However, when Kafrissen returned, students informed him that the school had hired a substitute to cover his class and that the students were required to remain in the classroom all day.

> ***"Some classes were just being cancelled without a rationale."***
>
> *Principal Michael Jones*

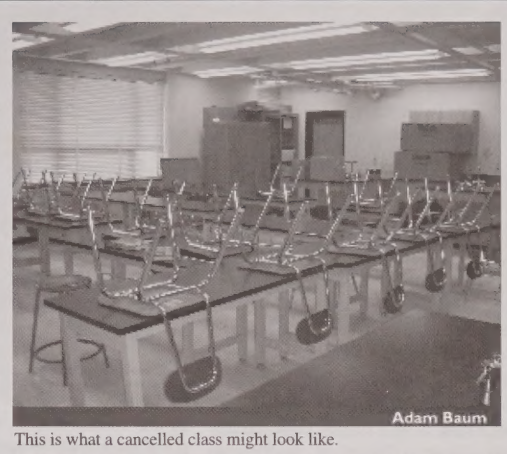
Other teachers in the school still operate under the terms of the 1994 Substitute Bill. For example, teachers in the Foreign Language department report that they are indeed able to cancel classes if they feel that the students could be more productive outside of class. The discrepancy between departments may be due to varying stances of the deans.

However inconsistently the new administrative decision is enforced, it was prompted by what the administration saw as an increase in careless cancellations. "Some classes were just being cancelled without a rationale," explained Jones. Now that teachers have to demonstrate to Dr. Jones that they meet condition B of the 1994 Substitute Bill, which states that the teacher must feel that the students' time would be better spent outside of class, they are less likely to get a class cancelled unless they have a compelling reason to do so.

In addition, the school is currently using a new substitute agency called Opis, which recently replaced Kelly Services as our main substitute provider. Despite the recent administrative decision intended to decrease class cancellations, some classes have been cancelled this year simply because not enough substitutes have been available. "Opis has not been doing as effective a job as Kelly Services did up to this point," said Jones. In the event that Opis is unable to cover all of the teacher absences on a given day, the administration cancels junior and senior classes first.

Students who skip classes in which their teacher is absent say they do so because they personally feel that they could use the time better elsewhere. The administration feels that the classroom is always the best learning environment unless the teacher strongly feels otherwise. When the teacher has left an assignment, students are especially advised to remain in class, where Dr. Jones feels that "the assignment is more likely to get done."

If the 1994 Senate bill is indeed still in effect with the added requirement of approval from Jones, widespread confusion among teachers and other administrators is preventing classes from being cancelled. In any case, the miscommunication between the administration and teachers coupled with Opis's poor performance has rendered the 1994 Substitute Bill ineffective.



Adam Baum

This is what a cancelled class might look like.

Students Support Harvard Decision

By Devaki Raj

Beginning in 2007, Harvard University will eliminate the option of early admission. This change in policy will affect the freshman class entering in September 2008.

Since the 1970s, Harvard has had an early action admissions program. This non-binding policy allows students to apply regular decision to other universities.

Harvard President Derek Bok stated, "We hope that doing away with early admission will improve the process and make it simpler and fairer."

"Early admission programs tend to advantage the advantaged," Bok continued. "Students from more sophisticated backgrounds and affluent high schools often apply early to increase their chances of admission, while minority students and students from rural areas, other countries, and high schools with fewer resources miss out. Students needing financial aid are disadvantaged by binding early decision programs, which prevent them from comparing aid packages. Others who apply early and gain admission to the college of their choice have less reason to work hard at their studies during their final year of high school."

For the past couple of years, former President Larry Summers had worked hard to allow Harvard to be reasonable for all income brackets. He

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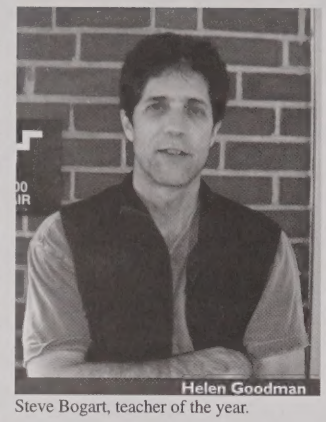
FEATURES

Steve Bogart Named Teacher of the Year

By Lily Barrett

Lexington High School's 2006 Teacher of the Year spends much of his time in the school's Black Box Theatre. He devotes his life to providing an exciting, creative environment in which students can express themselves through drama. He teaches a wide range of classes, and directs a musical in the fall. In past years, he has organized Winterfest, a student-run drama festival, and helped students write, produce, and stage Globefest. His energy, openness, and abundance of ideas are endlessly inspiring. He still keeps in touch with his former students, some of whom have achieved fame, including Amanda Palmer of the Dresden Dolls. Described by junior Andy Short as "full of life," Steve Bogart (who prefers his students to call him either Bogart or Steve) has been named Teacher of the Year by Jeffrey Leonard and a committee comprised of Lexington Public Schools faculty and staff. Here, Bogart answers questions put to him by The Musket.



Steve Bogart, teacher of the year.

Q: Which classes do you teach?

A: Art of the Theatre, Improvisation, Playwriting and Directing, and Drama of Social Issues (DSI).

Q: What do you enjoy about teaching drama to kids?

A: I love watching kids find their confidence and their feeling of joy in expression and creation. I love collaborating with students and turning the classroom into a dramatic playground or laboratory. And I love when the students begin to feel safe enough to really stretch their comfort levels and discover other sides of themselves.

Q: What is your definition of art?

A: Art is a way of being, thinking, imagining, doing, and living that gives voice to new forms.

Q: Which shows do you direct in school?

A: I usually direct the musical and workshop an original script with students. Once in a while, I'll direct something outside of school as well, but the school year tends to be so busy that it's almost impossible. Last year, I directed a couple of staged readings of plays outside of school. This year, I'm workshopping a new play with some members of my theatre company.

Q: What would you consider to be the limitations and assets of high-school productions?

A: High school productions are short, intense periods of time where students work with tremendous energy and commitment to try and achieve the highest level of performance possible. Some limitations can be the lack of training or experience in the performance. It is difficult to trust and let go of preconceptions and truly live in the moment during a performance. Other limitations may be related to content, although we have never shied away from content that may be controversial.

Q: What do you do outside of drama?

A: I paint and write plays, screenplays, poetry, and some hybrid of creative nonfiction. I meet with a group of artists, writers, and performers one Sunday a month in an open sharing of work. The group is called the Surreal Salon Sunday. I'm also an adjunct professor for the University of New Orleans Low Residency creative writing program, where I've taught screenwriting and playwriting online and for the University's summer program in Madrid.

Q: Wow! When do you ever find time to relax?

A: I'm taking the spring semester off. I plan to write, paint, work on a couple of theater pieces, and try to get some art exhibitions.

Q: How do you feel about receiving the Teacher of the Year award?

A: I feel extremely honored and humbled by the award. There are many great teachers at LHS that I hold in high esteem. My colleagues have been incredibly gracious and congratulatory.

Q: How do you feel about someone impersonating you on Facebook?

A: Well, there's nothing I can do about that. From what I hear, it's playful and benign, and as long as it isn't offensive to people, I suppose it's fine. Someone also created a Friendster account in my name, and that is actually more annoying, because people find the account and e-mail it to say hello,

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Seniors Win Spirit Week

By Sophie Isaak

Spirit Week came and left Lexington High School resulting in a rush of school pride. Despite the inherent lameness that encompasses Spirit Week, there were remarkably high levels of participation. It seems that students were able to overcome their fear of appearing ridiculous resulting in a large display of spirit.

The first day was hair and hat décor day. Students and teachers arrived at school with a wide assortment of hats, caps, pigtails, and other manifestations of head and hair creativity. While some wore their spirit all day, others pulled Red Sox hats from backpacks and sheepishly adorned them for science class only. Despite participation among all grades, the juniors took the day with style.

Tuesday was decade's day, and it required a little more creativity. The freshmen were assigned the 70s, the sophomores the 60s, the juniors the 50s, and the seniors were given the 80s. The teachers wore ensembles from the decade in which they attended high school. Girls donned hippie-chick looks from the 60s and 70s, poodle-skirts from the 50s, and vintage-Madonna influenced outfits from the 80s. Boys wore hippie-dude looks from the 60s and 70s, tight jeans and white tees from the 50s, and Bon Jovi hair from the 80s. The seniors won the day with flying colors.

Color day arrived on Wednesday with freshmen dressing in red, sophomores in yellow, juniors in purple, and seniors in blue. With hallways decorated in corresponding colors, LHS was transformed into a crayon box of school spirit. Despite the steep price, juniors bought "Real juniors wear purple" tee-shirts with zeal. However, the seniors won.

The next day was sports team day. Kids wore jerseys, hats, and even uniforms from their favorite sports. Pats jerseys and Red Sox attire dominated the day, yet others represented from different sports. Although less noticeable, many sported shirts from their favorite soccer, hockey, or basketball teams. In the end, the seniors yet again came out on top.

Friday was black and white day, followed by the black and white dance on Friday night. Despite the simple instructions, people went all out, wearing outfits complete with nail polish, hats, shoes, and socks, all in the designated colors. To finish off the week, the seniors won, sealing their victory.

Some would argue that the senior Spirit Week planners on Class Council were too hard on the juniors, giving them the 50s for decade day and purple for color day. However, the juniors put in a strong effort and they will surely have an easier time next year.

Musket

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Ixtapa: Fine Mexican Restaurant & Cantina

By Rivka Barrett

You'll find casual surroundings at Ixtapa, a restaurant on Massachusetts Avenue in Lexington.

Be sure to try the Nacho Supreme (warm, spicy tortillas smothered in cheese, beans, tomatoes, onions, sour cream, and guacamole) for only $7.99.

Other favorites include the Chile Rolleno (pastry filled with melted cheese and topped with tomato sauce), the Sopa de Albondigos (spicy, flavorful soup with large meatballs, potatoes, and carrots), and the Ixtapas Trio (three enchiladas: chicken, cheese, and shredded beef, with beans and rice).

For dessert, order the Chimi Cheesecake, Apple Burrito (apples and cinnamon in a tortilla with caramel and whipped cream) or Soapillas (pastries covered with cinnamon sugar.)

This is not the place to go to if you are looking for truly authentic Mexican food. The salsa is just about as American as you can get and the menu caters primarily to families with younger kids. Nevertheless, everyone can enjoy Ixtapa and have a fun meal.

For Chocolate Lovers Only

By Rivka Barrett

If you love chocolate and don't mind spending twenty-six bucks, try Langham Boston's Chocolate Bar, open only on Saturdays from 12-3 PM. According to the Executive Pastry Chef, Alejandro Luna, the chefs start baking on Wednesdays and get up at 4:00 on Saturday mornings to make all the pastries themselves.

The Chocolate Bar is located in Café Fleuri, a large French-style atrium restaurant located at the Langham Hotel in Boston. There are 126 different desserts guaranteed to make your dreams come true and at the same time make you completely sick. You can dip marshmallows, pineapples, and strawberries in the Chocolate Fountain, and sample milk, dark, and white chocolate fondues.

Some interesting choices were the Green Tea Opera (which didn't have much of a chocolate taste, but might appeal to tea fanatics) and the White Forest cake, topped with strawberry mousse and three liquor balls. In addition, you have a choice of four kinds of ice cream, homemade donuts, cookies, truffles, and hot chocolate.

The best desserts include "Smores" (chocolate-and-marshmallow mousse), dark chocolate crème brulee, chocolate bread pudding, and dark chocolate-covered bananas on drumsticks. The chefs also allow you to design your own crepes. If you choose this option, you may pick from a variety of toppings, including marshmallows and fruit.

The Chocolate Bar is open until June. Reservations are recommended.

Seniors Danielle Dahan, Micaela Atkins, and Jinhee Oh outside the GSA dance.

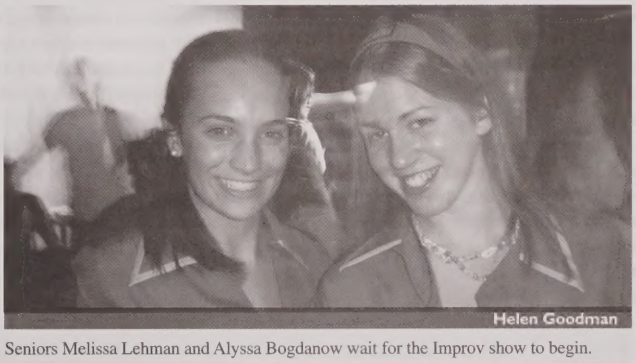
LHS Celebrates Hallow's Eve

By Helen Goodman

This Halloween, Improv Troupe and the GSA competed for the attention of the student body as they both threw Halloween parties at the same time. Since both the GSA Halloween dance and the Improv Troupe's Halloween show tend to draw a somewhat similar crowd, many students found a way to attend both, whether that meant decorating pumpkins with Bogart and then catching the end of the dance, or setting up with the GSA and then watching Improv Troupe's first show of the year.

The Improv Troupe party consisted of eating candy, doing face-paint, and showing off costumes. Following the party, the Troupe put on a strong performance to kick off the year. Newcomers Ben Smith, Selena Lane, Adrian Zagaeski, Melissa Croes, Cindy Garvin, Andy Short, and Chrissy Atchinson all met the high standards of the regular Improv show crowd. In contrast to years past, the current Troupe's jokes seem to generally have less to do with sex and more to do with animals.

When the Improv show ended, many viewers raced downstairs to catch the last 45 minutes of the GSA dance. The event drew a sizable crowd, and many people were so well disguised in their Halloween costumes that they were unrecognizable. Or maybe they really were strangers; the GSA dance is unique among in-school dances in that people from other schools and towns can come without prior approval. Notable costumes included Eric Eid-Reiner dressed up as a girl, and Tessa Harrisson as a unicorn.



Seniors Melissa Lehman and Alyssa Bogdanow wait for the Improv show to begin.

FLiCK PiCK: Half Nelson

By Danny Metzger-Traber

Half Nelson takes the traditional black and white salvation story and plants it directly in the gray. The film by Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden, an expanded version of Sundance winner Gowanus, Brooklyn, shows us a compelling character analysis of two individuals trying to make it through hard times.

Dan Dunne (Ryan Gosling) is a high school teacher and girls' basketball coach who has lost himself trying to inspire his class and teach his urban students the way. Drey (Shareeka Epps) is one of Dunne's student athletes, attempting to rise above her troubled circumstances of a jailed brother and an absent mother.

When Drey catches Dunne doing drugs, it begins a redemptive journey for both of them. Gosling's performance is not only inspiring, but also unexpected from the man who starred in The Notebook. He clearly portrays the maelstrom of inner conflict consuming this urban teacher. Newcomer Shareeka Epps delivers a powerful performance, maintaining the high level set by Gosling, and delivering the potent chemistry that sets this film apart.

While Half Nelson does not compromise itself to offer a happy ending, it does leave the viewer with something very valuable: hope.

got ideas?

Send in your letters, photography, comments, cartoons and what ever else you can scrounge up . . .

Leave it in the Musket Mailbox in the library or e-mail it to *themusket@gmail.com*

EDITORIALS

Effects of the Failed Override

By Gita Ramamurti

Many Lexington students have never heard about Proposition 2, but its effects have been felt by everyone this year.

In 1980, Massachusetts' voters approved a ballot initiative limiting annual property tax increases to 2.5 percent. Two years later, it became law. Since then, Lexington has not been allowed to raise property taxes by more than 2.5 percent without an override vote by residents. Last summer, by a margin of just 226 votes, Lexington voters defeated critical parts of the override that would have provided extra resources for our school system.

So, two months into the school year, how are we coping?

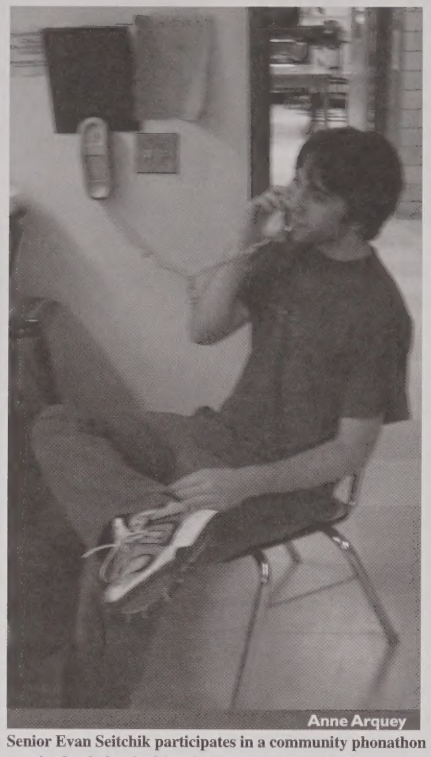
The brunt of the cuts has been felt by teachers. Some lost their jobs, while others survived but have to teach more courses or larger classes. Teachers of mathematics, social studies, and foreign languages, who had previously taught four classes, now teach five. According to Principal Jones, these teachers have 25 to 35 more students than last year, an increase of more than 25 percent in the student-teacher ratio. In science classes, this ratio has increased by 33 percent.

Students have also paid a price. Principal Jones noted, "From a scheduling perspective, there has been less flexibility in changing students' schedules or accommodating student requests."

Another casualty has been the Math Help Room, which used to be staffed by math teachers. If you do the math, you'll see they no longer have enough time left to volunteer. In its place is the Math Tutoring Center in room 828, run by community volunteers. It is a vital resource, but can't provide everything the Math Help Room used to in the past.

Science classes have also been particularly hurt. All non-AP science courses have lost one period of class time, out of the usual six periods. While this reduction in class time has certainly made some students happy, it has also caused teachers to cut back on curriculum topics. Most students will now receive a less complete exposure to science. And the Science Olympiad has been axed for the year.

Debate has also lost much of its travel budget. In an activity where competing in national tournaments is a vital part of learning, this is bad news. To save money, the team has resorted to traveling by school bus to tournaments hours away. Debaters are also trying to make up the lost money by running extra phonathons and fundraising events. Naomi Logan, a senior varsity policy debater, comments, "I never remember committing so much time to debate fundraising before."



Senior Evan Seitchik participates in a community phonathon to raise funds for the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Team.

Finally, to raise revenue, the school committee decided to jack up parking fees, from $15 per semester to approximately $107 per semester—a seven-fold increase. This huge price increase deterred many students from entering the parking lottery, since they felt a shorter walk to school wasn't worth an extra $92. Instead, students park near the playground or on the road and put up with the longer trek to school. Not everyone is complaining, though. Senior Alex Katz, who got one of those expensive spots, says "It was nice, because the price hike decreased the number of people applying for a parking spot, which increased my chances of getting one."

Like the failed override in 2003, last summer's failed override is hurting LHS. State aid to Lexington has not kept pace with the growth of our school system, not to mention with inflation or higher energy prices. State aid is actually less than it was in 1999. Despite these facts, I'm hopeful that our resourceful teachers, students, and parents will find a way to keep LHS functioning at its usual high standards.

Maintain the Weighted GPA

By Garth Goldwater

The Weighted GPA Committee recently released a report which concluded that we should, a) remove the weighted GPA and, b) include a median grade given by in each course on a student's transcript, irrespective of the teacher. The intent of these suggestions is to reduce stress. Unfortunately, these changes would do exactly the opposite. Including a median grade in each class would be far worse even than class rank; it would label certain students as "below average"—and in an era of grade inflation, merely "average" is something no one wants to be labeled.

A student receiving a grade below the average grade in a class would be under an extremely high level of stress, and, moreover, the report would indicate that the student couldn't achieve at a "normal" level. This would force an incredible amount of competition in our classroom, as the main comparison of a student's grade would be to the only metric given: the average grade, and every student would desperately want to be above that cutoff. However, the harder each student tries, the harder it becomes to reach the metric, because the median is raised every time a student does better.

This policy runs into all of the problems of class rank and more, since rank stress would be pushed up to every individual class instead of simply directed at a student's overall performance. Second, measurement relative to other students never makes sense – some years have smart kids, and some of the kids raising the average could have a lighter course load in other areas. A simple median would not communicate that.

In addition to these problems, since the median would be of every teacher teaching the course and not specific to a teacher, students would be punished for being put in a class with a harder-grading teacher, even though students have no control over their future teachers in our scheduling system,

The argument to reduce the weighted GPA comes from several studies the committee released in its report; however, given the results of these studies, the conclusion to remove the WGPA is questionable at best. The first study cited a survey of LHS students in which students ranked what they felt was important in the college admissions process. "25% of students ranked the WGPA as one of the least important factors." That means that an astounding 75% of stu-

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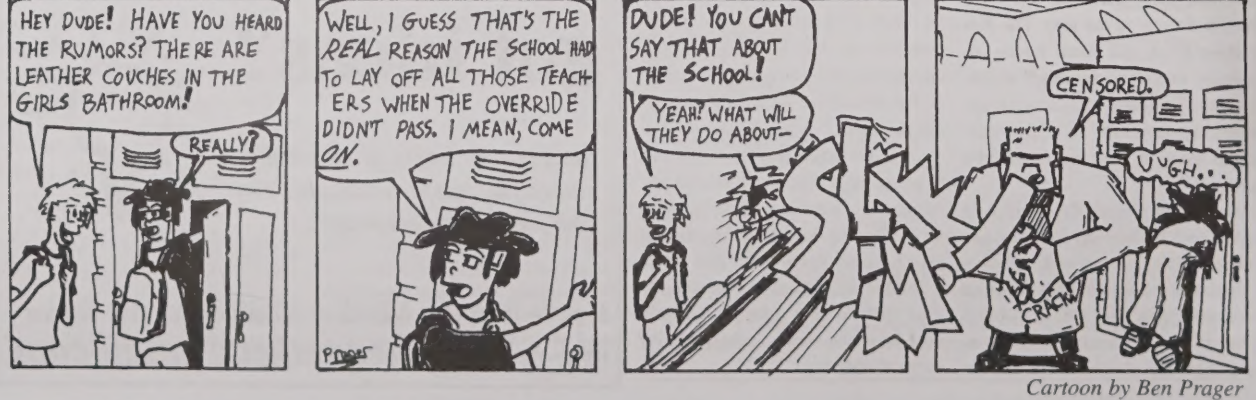

HEY DUDE! HAVE YOU HEARD THE RUMORS? THERE ARE LEATHER COUCHES IN THE GIRLS BATHROOM!
REALLY?
WELL, I GUESS THAT'S THE REAL REASON THE SCHOOL HAD TO LAY OFF ALL THOSE TEACHERS WHEN THE OVERRIDE DIDN'T PASS. I MEAN, COME ON.
PRAGER
DUDE! YOU CAN'T SAY THAT ABOUT THE SCHOOL!
YEAH! WHAT WILL THEY DO ABOUT—
CENSORED.
UGH...
CRACK

Cartoon by Ben Prager

FEATURES

LHS Musicians Jam at Monterey

By Toni Maeck

Many of us have heard of the jazz greats McCoy Tyner, Roy Hargrove, etc. However, few get the opportunity to hear them all in one weekend, much less play alongside them, as Lexington High School's jazz ensemble did this past September at the Monterey Jazz Festival in California. Trombonist Toby Foreman, an LHS senior, said, "You hear all of these famous names all your life and you've listened to them before and now you get to see all of them at once in one weekend. It was amazing to see the people you aspire to be all of your life on one stage."

The Monterey Jazz Festival is one of the most prestigious jazz events of the year. Zack Nestle-Patt, an LHS senior and bass player, said, "From most everyone in the jazz community's perspective, Monterey is the best jazz festival in the world. There's so much amazing music in just over a weekend."

To be chosen to perform at such a renowned festival, the group had to endure a rigorous judging process. First, they submitted an audition tape to the Monterey Next Generation Competition, where the top fifteen high school jazz performers in the nation compete for three performance slots at the full Monterey Festival. The Lexington group placed second in the Next Generation Competition, earning them a slot at the festival.

The Monterey Festival is only one achievement in a long list of the jazz program's accomplishments. This past year alone, the Jazz Ensemble and the Jazz Combo have performed at the Lincoln Center Jazz Festival in New York, the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, and at other national and international events. A tour highlight was a private gig at Clint Eastwood's estate.

Some of the group's best moments occurred offstage. Zack Nestle-Patt enjoyed being recognized in an airport. "The band was sitting next to an old woman who asked where we were from. We told her we were from Lexington High School and she said 'I went to your concert and it was great.' This was a stranger who had gone to see us perform. She didn't have to go, she didn't know anyone in the band, but she went to see us make music. She had a really great time." Small moments like these are also what make music meaningful to Zack. "It's that feeling that makes me want to play music everyday," he says. "It's what makes me want to be a musician."

Becca Savoy and Sasha Wilson eat their lunch in an undisclosed location.

By Helen Goodman

Winter is approaching. For some, that means hot chocolate, indoor sports, and your Northface fleece. For lunchtime floor-dwellers, it means migration. As soon as the snow starts to fall, the floor of the main hallway becomes covered with a slick, icy layer of slush. The multitudes of students who trek in and out of the main building's quad entrance only perpetuate the problem. Many students can tolerate the occasional puddle beneath the Collage of Voices. For others, a sacred habitat is endangered.

"I started eating lunch in the main hallway my sophomore year," said senior Becca Savoy. "The Commons are too crowded. I needed some space and some time off." Savoy and her friends left their table in Commons II in hopes of finding new land to settle. Initially, they upgraded to the music practice rooms. "Some days we'd share the room with a piano. Other days, a drum set," recounts Savoy. Unfortunately, a ban on food and drink in the practice rooms forced Savoy and her friends out of their new location. By winter, they were in the main hallway.

The area of the main hallway that extends from the main office to the entrance to Commons I has been used during lunchtime for years. Students often seek shelter in the small alcoves surrounding entrances to the gymnasium. For bolder students, the stretch of floor space directly under the photography display case provides spaciousness and exposure. In the first few months of school, freshmen are known to set up camp in the main hallway before they and their friends have claimed a booth in Commons I.

While many students enjoy eating in the main hallway, others find the high energy of the region to be too much. "Once, I was sitting in that little area where people can enter the gym, and someone opened a door into my back," said Savoy. "It hurt my back. My back was hurt and my feelings were hurt." If the ever-opening doors and heavily traversed hallway does not deter students, then wintertime will. While students track snow and mud into the building, the hallway dwellers move elsewhere; after all, they usually left the Commons in pursuit of greater cleanliness to begin with.

The auditorium, the quad, the roof, the elevator shaft - all of these places have been used by students during the winter months. Sometimes, a group of lunch eaters grows so attached to its winter habitat that it stays there throughout second semester. "A few groups have really settled into some pretty odd places," observes junior Sophie Isaak. "There are always about ten people in the art wing, a trio in a stairwell, a random couple in the main entrance lobby."

Other groups become nomadic, constantly seeking out the ultimate dining area. For Savoy and her friends, the search goes on. "I wouldn't tell you where I ate today, because you might steal my idea. I can't tell you where I'll eat tomorrow, because I simply don't know where the winds will take me."

Senate Briefs

By Eric Eid-Reiner

The Senate unanimously passed (with one abstention) a bill directing the LHS Administration to "add the total number of community service accepted to date to student profiles provided by two pieces of web software: AP Web and Anaces." The bill notes that "faculty already has online access to student records through this software." The bill's rationale notes that the Community Service Committee Report recommends that faculty take a more active role in helping students perform community service so that they are more able to identify students in need. It also pointed out that guidance counselors, administrators, and their secretaries are very busy today.

A bill stipulating that "the total number of community service hours accepted by the school will no longer be listed on transcripts" is currently under discussion. It also requires that the school profile be altered to "clearly state" the extent to which community service hours are verified. Supporters of the bill cite the Community Service Committee's finding that 19% of students admit to having falsely reported service hours, and feel that the school should not put its name behind these hours submitted. They also say that even if the bill is vetoed, it will evoke some discussion and administrative consideration on this issue, and may fuel the creation of some sort of community service coordinator position.

Opponents of the bill feel that the Senate should work on improving the verification process, and that this bill is an extreme measure that hurts honest students who have actually done the community service hours that they report. Guidance counselors on the Senate have noted that there is ample opportunity on college applications for students to list their community service activities, and/or to write about them. Some question whether the extent to which the hours are verified is a necessary part of this bill.

EDITORIALS/NEWS

Weighted GPA

Continued from page 2

dents felt that the WGPA was not the least important factor in college admission, not that students in general think that the WGPA isn't important. This is simpler than basic statistics; I don't understand how a committee could warp a pie graph. Even if "28.3% ranked unweighted GPA as one of the most important factors," students can still consider weighted GPA important.

This brings me to a core point of this editorial; a weighted GPA and an unweighted GPA are not mutually exclusive. Just because colleges see a weighted GPA on our transcript does not mean they will ignore our unweighted GPA, nor does a student's support for unweighted GPA even come close to suggesting that students don't believe weighted GPA is important. This is probably why, as cited in the report, 63% of students were against eliminating the weighted GPA and 77% disagreed with the statement, "I feel all courses at LHS should carry equal weight."

The committee's only response to the student survey was that "students in higher ability levels, advanced placement and honors classes are more supportive of the WGPA than students in level 1, level 2, and unleveled classes." This seems like an obvious correlation to me, but I don't understand why it discounts the wishes of the student body.

Harder-working students would like to be rewarded for their hard work. Taking an honors-level course doesn't discount the truth of your opinion, so I am still having trouble understanding why the committee took this stratification as a reason to ignore the comments and input of students in higher-level classes.

The report later cites an article by Anne McGrath, in which she states that, "By itself, a 3.5 GPA won't count for much. It might just prove that you've taken easy courses. What's critical to the people deciding your fate is that given your abilities, you've pursued the most challenging possible curriculum and have (mostly) succeeded." This is an excellent demonstration of another point; eliminating the WGPA won't reduce enrollment in AP or honors classes – kids would have the same desire to take them, because colleges ask students to take harder courses so consistently. Face it, taking more difficult classes is a trend that isn't going to go away.

The report, close to the end, cites a questionnaire sent to the top ten most-applied-to colleges at LHS, stating that, "of these ten schools, only Brown, Northeastern and UNH request a WGPA from LHS." My question is, so then, why don't we continue to include a WGPA on our transcript to better our chances of admission to those schools?

The truth is, a GPA in general doesn't tell a school very much. It doesn't record a student's specialty in a certain subject, or whether a student's grades are good or bad because of effort, performance on tests, technically difficulties, or a weakness in a specific area of the curriculum in a class. As long as we continue to use grades as a way of measuring a performance, we will be applying an inadequate form of measurement to a much more complicated issue. I think, personally, that a short narrative evaluation (a paragraph or two of description of performance instead of, or in addition to a grade) for each class, which references areas for improvement and areas where a student succeeded, would be far more effective than grades in communicating to an admissions reviewer the actual substance of a student. But that's a topic better suited for another editorial.

Senate Considers Service Changes

By Ann Wang

Ten representatives from each class and sixteen faculty members make up the LHS Student-Faculty Senate, which meets X-blocks in the library media center. In its first month and a half of operation, the Senate has run freshman elections and discussed several issues.

The Senate's constitution sets apart five "open seats" for students who belong to groups "unrepresented" in the Senate. Open seat holders are appointed after students petition the Senate, instead of being elected by the student body. At the beginning of this year, two of those seats were filled.

Andrew Corr now represents the Gay-Straight Alliance and Alan Chaulet represents physically disabled students. A proposed amendment to the constitution that would encourage more people to fill open seats was turned down after the Senate decided the current language was adequate.

A proposed bill for an annual community service fair, similar to a college fair, where outside organizations would come to LHS with community service opportunities, was tabled, or postponed, because the issue involves input and participation from the guidance department.

However, the bill will be put to another vote soon, so the bill's future is still hopeful. Previously, the Senate wrote a community service report whose implementation would entail reorganizing the school's community service system. The Senate decided not to take responsibility for implementing the bill.

The Senate also discussed the possibility of a senior final exam bill that would allow seniors with grades above a certain level to opt out of taking the final exam of a course, at the teacher's discretion.

A bill to give open campus to second semester sophomores is also under consideration. Current seniors and sophomores should discuss and consider the possibility that, just like the checks and balances in the United States government, the principal still has the power to veto any bill the Senate passes, at his discretion.

Steve Bogart: Teacher of the Year

Continued from page 2

but it's not really me! I tried to have Friendster shut down the account, but they said there was nothing illegal about it.

A student recalls that Bogart, upon passing her in the hallway, slipped her a piece of paper. It had "Carpe Diem" scrawled on it in blue marker. "Seize the day." This is a teacher who doesn't lecture or give formal tests. Instead, he helps students, perhaps particularly those who feel a little lost amidst the chaos of LHS, to find their niche and "seize the day." He also strives to incorporate students' actual opinions and perceptions into LHS dramatic productions, even if the material tends to catch audiences off-guard. As Sandra DiMartino, a fellow drama teacher and friend of Bogart's, remarks, "Steve is a man who is passionate about creating art that speaks to the human condition and all its faults and foibles. He will not compromise on speaking the truth through his art, whether it is his truth or his students'."

Harvard Decision

Continued from page 1

launched a program where admitted students whose family income is less than $60,000 can study at Harvard for free.

So how does Harvard's recent decision to do away with early admission affect students at LHS? Most students support Harvard's decision, even if it does interfere with their long-term college application plans.

Senior Kelsey Savage states, "I think it is a good idea to eliminate Harvard's early admissions program. This will start a trend for many other universities who have openly stated that early admissions is prime for recruiting athletes... Competition will decrease and minority students will have a better chance at admissions."

Harvard's drastic decision to remove early admissions comes at a time when the university is working hard to make tuition more affordable for students from low-income backgrounds. This new policy is aimed at leveling the undergraduate admissions process for all income groups.

Harvard is currently the richest university in the world, boasting an endowment of roughly $28 billion. The school is also one of the most expensive, costing $45,000 a year before financial aid.

LHS Has First Lockdown Drill

By Ann Wang

In elementary school, disaster planning involved having us file out of the school building to the loud buzzing of fire alarms or occasionally performing a bus drill that simply required exiting the bus from the back door instead of the front. Unfortunately, as our class has grown up, tragedies such as the Columbine High School shootings and 9-11 have forced schools to plan for much more serious situations that could possibly occur in a school environment.

Recently, during H block on October 18th, the high school conducted a lockdown drill. The purpose of a lockdown is to protect students in the case of a school shooting or similar situation.

As the instructions to begin were given over the intercom, teachers shut and locked doors, pasted paper over the door windows, turned off the lights, and slipped a piece of colored paper underneath the door to indicate whether they were missing students from the class. Meanwhile, students huddled together on the classroom floors away from doors and windows and were told to keep the noise to a minimum until Assistant Principal George Mechem announced, to everyones delight, that classes could recommence.

Rest assured that the voice giving out directions on the other side of the intercom knew what it was talking about. In order to come up with the best plan, school officials attended workshops run by police and fire stations where different scenarios were presented. They also researched on the internet, and factored in our campus structure as well as precedents of school violence.

According to Mr. Mechem, LHS's lockdown plan is quite conventional compared to those of other schools and to what disaster experts recommend. He would especially like to mention that the lockdown drill went "very successfully." He credits both students and faculty for taking the operation seriously, cooperating well, and excelling in emergency situation preparation.

SPORTS

Minutemen Anticipate Thanksgiving Game

By Simon Lehar

With their recent 36-26 drubbing at the hands of Stoneham, the Minutemen's season record was evened at 5-5 and now the boys can only anticipate a Thanksgiving Day showdown against the undefeated Burlington Red Devils.

Against Stoneham, the team was keyed by J.J. Wentzel who was filling in at running back for the injured Brian Walsh. Wentzel rolled up 175 yards in rushing before the day was over. But his efforts were not enough as the Minutemen went down in their second straight defeat.

Prior to the Stoneham game the Minutemen lost a 3-0 heartbreaker to Reading. A victory in that game would have ensured the boys a winning season in the powerful Middlesex League.

Aside from top ranked Burlington and a highly regarded Woburn squad, the league has been remarkably even this season. That was one of the reasons the Reading loss was so devastating.

A good sign for the Minutemen early in the season was their stingy defense. The Lexington defensive side of the ball kept a solid core of players from last season.

Against the Westford Grey Ghosts, the Minutemen defense, led by Trevor Keenan and Peter Krensky with 10 and 7 tackles respectively, limited Scott Foley, a 1200-yard rusher last season, to just 72 yards on 17 carries.

Understandably, the offense couldn't get much going with many first time starters. The very next week, the defense stifled another opponent, holding Concord to just 3 points.

The outstanding group of seniors led the defense again. This time Ross Curley and Nick Pisegna led with 8 and 6 tackles, respectively. Andrew Alspaugh, Maury Fitzgerald, Danny Popiel, Peter Krensky, and Kevin Wu also chipped in to shut down the Concord offense. Sophomore Lance Greene contributed with an interception late in the first half.

Down 3-0 late in the game, the penalty-plagued offense drove the ball up the field in a 13-play drive, in which sophomore halfback Brian Walsh carried the ball 10 consecutive times, and scored with less than a minute to go in the game.

Coach Bill Tighe was quoted in saying that not only did Walsh and the offensive line deserve credit on that drive, but also Trevor Keenan who hit key blocks to spring Walsh for key runs into the secondary.

In the third game of the season, the offense finally came into their own, scoring 30 points against Melrose. In the opening drive Ross Curley hit Darius Walker over the middle and Walker took off down the sideline for a 79-yard touchdown. After the defense held Melrose to two three and outs, Ross Curley hit a wide-open Matt Cunha for a 28-yard touchdown.

After a bad snap on a punt, Lexington increased their lead to 16-0 on a safety. To make things even better, the Minutemen scored on their next drive as Krensky, Curley, and Walsh pushed the defense back to the 10-yard line. From the ten, Curley hit Maury Fitzgerald with the pass to put the Minutemen up 23-0 at halftime.

In the second half, Melrose managed to prevent the shut out but they were answered by an 80-yard drive by the Minutemen including a 20-yard run from Curley, a 12-yard pass to receiver Sean Sullivan, and a 22-yard touchdown pass to Jesse Kajko.

The final score was 30-15. Nick Pisegna had 8 tackles, Kevin Wu had 7, and Ross Curley, who laid out an unsuspecting receiver, led the defense.

As the team ventured into Belmont the next week, both sides of the ball, again, proved that they could get the job done. Ross Curley passed for just under 100 yards and ran for two touchdowns. Brian Walsh took 17 carries for 91 yards and a touchdown.

After pulling out to an early lead, the story continued for the tenacious Lexington defense, as they subdued an offense that had scored almost 40 points a game and made a game turning stand at their own 4-yard line. Trevor Keenan proved to be the biggest force, recording 7 tackles.

On the following drive, good offensive plays by Krensky, Walsh, Walker, and Fitzgerald led to a Curley touchdown run to give Lexington a 7-0 lead. After another great defensive series, the Minutemen forced Belmont to cough the ball up on their own 9-yard line.

After three plays, Brian Walsh took the hand-off and blew through the pile for a 3-yard run. After another Curley touchdown run from 40 yards out that was called back on a holding call, Belmont quarterback Matt Ruane scored his own touchdown to make it 14-6. However, the defense wouldn't let another score happen as two fumbles recovered by Peter Krensky and Trevor Keenan would lead to another Lexington touchdown and a clock-killing drive to finish the game.

After a loss to the then seventh ranked Woburn Tanners, the Minutemen still looked to be in good shape for the rest of the season. But they ran into some tough going in subsequent weeks. Unless the Minutemen upset the highly touted Burlington squad, Lexington may be doomed to finish with a losing record.

Catching Up With Former LHS Athelete Mark MacDonald

By Simon Lehar

Most students at Lexington High School probably remember Mark MacDonald for his heroics for the basketball and baseball team. Mark has since moved on to play basketball for Brown University where he is currently a junior and is an everyday player. Last year MacDonald put up 7.3 points, 4 rebounds, and 1.1 assists per game.

As a four-year varsity player, MacDonald built quite a reputation for himself as a three-time Middlesex League All-Star, two-year team captain, two-year Globe and Herald All-Scholastic selection, Lexington outstanding male athlete, McDonald's All-American nominee, and co-MVP of the Middlesex League in his senior year.

On top of all that, he won the Massachusetts House of Representatives Award and the Junior Class Award for overall excellence in character, scholarship, athletics, and service to others. Since then, he has won the Ivy League Rookie of the Week, scoring 25 points against New Hampshire. Despite his record of high achievement in both high school and college, MacDonald has noticed a difference between playing on the two different levels.

"The main difference [between high school and college basketball] is the competition. Everyone at this level was recruited to be a Division 1 basketball player. The difference between the average players and the good players is the amount of work you are willing to put in, whereas in high school a lot of people got by with their natural ability. There is a lot more pressure in college because people make their living off of how you perform on the court. In high school a coach makes a fraction of his yearly salary coaching basketball."

But MacDonald still remembers his past and being part of the Lexington basketball tradition. "My best memory was beating Watertown at Watertown for the league title my junior year. It was by far the best individual game I played in High School. The place was sold out and there was a real rivalry between the two schools. There had been trash talking in chat rooms on the Internet between the fans for weeks before the game and the place was jumping even during the girl's game before. I came out and scored the first 22 points of the game, I was just in the zone. Hugging all of my teammates after we won and the fans rushed the court was awesome. I got interviewed for the news after the game it was really all a high school athlete could ask for. It's a memory I will have until I die."

MacDonald seemed happy about his decision to play at Brown University and the potential that the team has for his next two years there. "They're a Division 1 program with a winning coaching staff, it's a great school and it was located close to home. I had a lot of scholarship offers but luckily my Dad was generous enough to say, 'If this is the place you want to go we can make it happen. It's your choice.' I am very thankful that I was able to take advantage of an opportunity like this. We got a new coach this year, Craig Robinson, who played at Princeton under the legendary coach, Pete Carril. This means we are learning the "Princeton offense" which is pretty complicated stuff. If we can master it in time and get comfortable with it we should be really tough in league play. We returned all 5 starters and finished last year really strong. I think we have a great chance to make a run at the league. We'll see. We have a lot of hard work ahead. First we have to take care of Michigan State in the Coaches vs. Cancer preseason tournament."

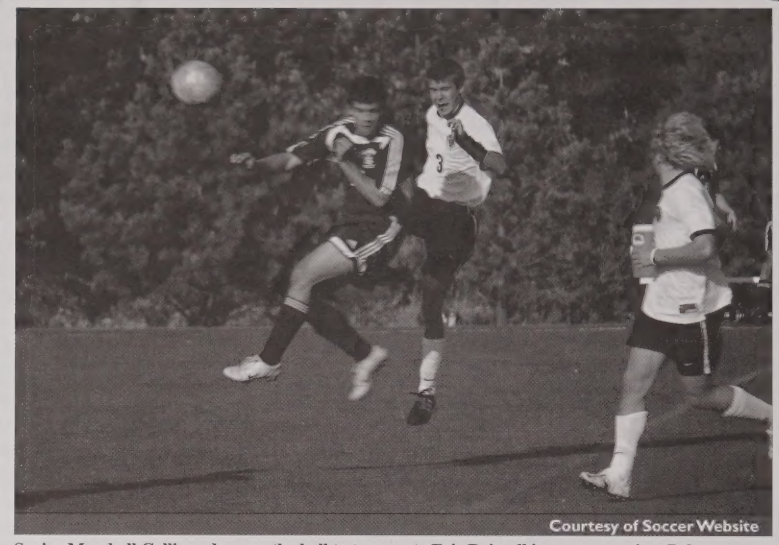
After his years at Brown are over, MacDonald sees himself playing professionally in some part of the world, "I'll see what options I have open to me, and I will weigh them and make the best decision for myself. After I finish up playing I might get into coaching or use my degree to get a job in the business world. Who knows? I try to live in the moment as much as possible."

MacDonald also expressed his opinions on this year's team and what he thinks their chances are. "I have a real passion for Lexington Basketball so I keep up as much as possible. This team is talented and deep. Henneberry is a true player and has a great feel for the game. Seany can really run the point and he has incredible poise out there. Ross plays his heart out every time he is out there. Big Mike is as good of a shot blocker as you get and has great touch near the basket. Cunha is the X factor. He should be the best big man in the league. If he realizes how good he can be this team can be really dangerous in the tournament. I love watching Lance play too. I try to come back for as many games as I can. I went to the East Boston game last year, and I was more nervous than when I played. I know coach will have them in great shape and dominating the league as usual. Good luck, boys."

SPORTS

Boys' Soccer Team Loses in Tough Final

By Arjun Gokhale



Senior Marshall Collins advances the ball to teammate Eric Driscoll in a game against Belmont.

Having once again reached the Divison One North Final, the boys soccer team dropped a close 2-1 match to a powerful St. John's Prep of Danvers team. Coming into the finals the Minutemen were ranked third in Eastern Massachusetts while the Catholic Conference powerhouse was ranked No. 1 with a record of 19-0-2.

The showdown between these two highly ranked teams lived up to expectations as the Minutemen rallied time and again in the second half to try to cut a 2-0 St. John's deficit. Unfortunately as was the case last year the boys fell short. The only goal the Minutemen were able to manage in this hard fought contest was scored by Andy Wright on a nifty pass from Eric Driscoll in the 75th minute. However, the boys could not find the net again and were destined to return from Cawley Stadium in Lowell disappointed.

Last year, the Lexington boys' soccer team watched dejectedly as Acton Boxboro eliminated them, and celebrated a thrilling 1-0 victory to advance deeper in the playoffs. This year, the tables were turned in the quarter-final game as the Minutemen bested A-B to reach the semifinals. With a starting roster packed with seniors, the Minutemen advanced by defeating the Colonials 1-0 on the strength of an early Eric Driscoll goal. The defense held off a furious comeback attempt by the Colonials, touching off a raucous celebration on the field, and setting up a date in the semifinals with Lincoln-Sudbury, who they easily defeated 5-2. This victory set up the showdown match with St. John's.

The journey to the playoffs was easy enough for the Minutemen en route to a 16-2 record and a third seed in the tournament. The boys, who were recognized as the top team in the state by the Boston Globe on numerous occasions, peaked early, winning their first eleven games.

Their first playoff game was easy enough, as they faced Peabody in the first round. After taking a 2-1 lead into the second half, the boys put the game away. Driscoll scored while colliding with the Peabody goalie and Andy Wright headed in a beautiful pass by Brian Longo off of a free kick. As the gap between the two teams grew, so did the physicality. Alex Lach was knocked to the turf several times and given a swollen ankle by a Peabody defender who eventually received a yellow card. Diego Garcia, who engaged in some playful banter with the opposing defenders and nearly drew a yellow card, took a few spills as well.

The defense never gave Peabody a chance to come back, leaving one local college scout to comment, "Those central defenders have dominated the game. That's the reason they are winning." The midfielders consistently won control of the ball, allowing Lexington to keep possession of the ball for long periods of time.

Throughout the year, the Minutemen have been paced by tri-captains Longo, Driscoll, and Goodrich.

The Minutemen were the highest scoring team in Middlesex due to a potent trio of attackers and midfielders. Wright, who led the league in goals scored, Lach, who was the runner up in points in the Middlesex league, and Longo combined to help the offense score sixty three goals in a eighteen game season. The defense, with Jasper Drisko in goal, helped the Minutemen to the highest goal differential in the league.

Girls' Field Hockey Succeeds in Playoffs

By Tsung-Tang Shen

In the playoffs, no one cares how the regular season went. As a result, Lincoln-Sudbury was not intimidated by the girls' field hockey team's impressive 14-2-2 record and their 5th seed.

Lincoln-Sudbury felt confident going into the second half of a first round playoff game against the Lexington field hockey team, and mounted a 1-0 lead after a difficult first half. The Lexington girls made sure to erase the deficit with a goal by senior Michelle Martini to send the game into overtime. A no-scoring 15 minute overtime period increased the suspense as the game continued into double overtime, featuring 7 on 7 play instead of the usual 11 on 11.

Both teams gave it their all as the clock ticked down. In a game that went right down to the wire, the clock read ten seconds as Lexington senior Brittany Lopes clinched the victory with a shot that found its way into the back of the net.

"This was one of our best games yet, we never gave up and we definitely earned the win," said junior Valerie Gilbert. Under the leadership of Coach Sandy Curt, the girls' season has been extremely successful.

Seniors Haley Busa and Erin Gallagher are co-captains of an upper-class dominated team. "Last year we were good, but we didn't improve during the season."

This year we're improving a lot as we play," said senior Abby Pisegna.

Next year, a young squad will be looking for leadership from only four experienced underclassmen on the team this year. Lexington will be facing North Andover for their second round match-up.

Girls' Volleyball Wraps Up Season

By Najeeb Hossain

The girls volleyball team ended the season in a disappointing manner, losing to Tewksbury in the first round of the post season tournament. Lexington came into the playoffs on a strong note, having defeated North Andover in the last game of the season to seize a spot in the tournament and finish the regular season 10 – 10. The Minutemen played well against the 8th seed Tewksbury, although this was not reflected in the final score, as they were shut out, 3-0. Even though the loss to Tewksbury was disappointing, the team is keeping their head high and looking forward to next season. As junior captain Heather Kozin reflected "We need to work a lot harder during the season so we can have a better record and a higher placement in the tournament. We need to come together as a team more so we can capitalize on our potential." In past years, the team has been blessed with size, but this year the team was smaller. Despite this size difference the team made the tournament, due to the stellar play of key players Samantha Pounder, Kristina Hankins and Tania Walzer. During the ups and downs of the season, team morale stayed high due to support from Coach Jane Bergin. Junior Molly Eisenberg commented, "She gives you tough love but you never feel like she doesn't care and she believes in us more than anyone else." Coach Bergin has high hopes for the upcoming season which is poised to be a good one.

O'Brien Captures State Title

By Sinclair Kluger

Sophomore sensation Amy O"Brien swam to a first place finish in the 50 yard freestyle at the recent Division One MIAA swimming championships at MIT. Amy topped her nearest competitor by over a half second in the race, a large margin for such a short distance.

O'Brien posted a time of 24.30, over three tenths of a second faster than her time in the at the North Sectionals a week earlier. Amy was coming off a brilliant swim which led to an overwhelming victory in the fifty at the sectionals.

Amy also took a sixth place at the state meet in the 100 yard freestyle.

Overall the Lexington girl swimmers placed 10th at the sectionals. In addition to O'Brien's outstanding performance a relay team of Maia Taft, Karina Chung, Eve Lowen and O'Brien swam to an eighth place finish in the 200 yard medley relay.

Along with her outstanding performance in the 50 free at the sectionals, O'Brien placed a solid 5th in the 100 butterfly. Teammmates Nicole Russo, Priscilla Briggs, Lowen and O'Brien also finished ninth in the 200 yard freestyle relay.